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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABIDJAN 000955

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STATE FOR AF/W-EPLUMB AND INR/AA-BGRAVES, LONDON FOR RBELL,
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IV](#)

SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: FPI THINKS ELECTIONS WILL SOLVE
CRISIS

REF: A. ABIDJAN 900

[¶](#)B. ABIDJAN 864

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CYNTHIA AKUETTEH FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) A
ND (D)

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary. Ivorian Popular Front (Front Populaire Ivoirien - FPI) Secretary General Sylvain Miaka Ouretto told Poloff September 7 that the FPI is not "against France," but that France should treat Cote d'Ivoire as a partner. Ouretto said elections are the solution to Cote d'Ivoire's crisis and that elections can be held before the civil administration is completely redeployed to the north and west and before disarmament is completed. He added that elections cannot be put off until everything is fixed and called for assistance from the international community for implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) and reconstruction. End Summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) FPI Secretary General Sylvain Miaka Ouretto told Poloff September 7 that the FPI supports free enterprise, freedom, universal health care, and decentralization. Ouretto noted that liberty means that citizens have the right to choose their leader. Ouretto added that, while the Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire - PDCI) believes Cote d'Ivoire's policies should be closely aligned with France, President Gbagbo's FPI believes Cote d'Ivoire should engage with the foreign countries that provide the most support and assistance to the country. Ouretto stated that the 2002 coup d'etat was a reaction to the Gbagbo government's shift away from France and openness to globalization because the FPI's new vision negatively affected certain special interests. Ouretto went on to say that the French press, in league with opposition politicians Alassane Dramane Ouattara and Henri Konan Bedie, have accused the Gbagbo administration of engaging in murder and child labor. Ouretto explained that the FPI is not against France, but believes France should treat Cote d'Ivoire as a partner and President Gbagbo as "the President of a sovereign state" who decides his country's future without taking orders from Paris.

[¶](#)3. (C) Ouretto said elections are the solution to Cote d'Ivoire's crisis and noted that the Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) calls for elections in the first trimester of [¶](#)2008. He explained that when President Gbagbo called for quick elections (Reftel B), he was encouraging the country's institutions to start working in order to hold elections as quickly as possible. Ouretto added that some misinterpreted Gbagbo's words, accusing him of trying to organize fraudulent elections. Ouretto said President Gbagbo will accept the voters' choice, even if he loses. He added that the FPI

accepted defeat in the most recent legislative and municipal elections and stated that those elections proved that the country's institutions can carry out fair and free elections.

Ouretto told Poloff that the Independent Electoral Commission has responsibility for setting the date of the elections. According to Ouretto, some have proposed that elections be held in 2010 in order to keep Gbagbo from running for President by arguing that he will have completed two 5-year terms in 2010, the maximum allowed by the Constitution. Ouretto said such an argument is specious because Gbagbo was only able to serve 2 years of his term before the coup d'etat. (Comment: Ouretto clearly meant that Gbagbo should be considered to have served only one term as President and be allowed to run for another term, but it seems unlikely that Ouretto meant that Gbagbo should be allowed to run for 2 additional terms of office. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Ouretto argued that elections can be held before the civil administration is completely redeployed to the north and west and before disarmament is completed. He said the government will do what is "essential" and the "rest will come later." He added that the country cannot wait to hold elections until everything is fixed and perfect and said reconstruction and development will be tasks to be handled by whichever government is elected. Ouretto said Cote d'Ivoire needs help from the international community for implementation of the OPA. He asked for "continuation of U.S. support" for Cote d'Ivoire and stated Cote d'Ivoire needs assistance from the international community for reconstruction and redeployment of the administration.

¶5. (C) Comment. Ouretto's comments underscore the impression that Gbagbo is pushing for elections as soon as possible and that he does not consider full OPA implementation to be

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essential before elections can be held (Reftel A). It seems likely that the government will wait until there has been enough progress on the OPA, for example that the audiences foraines have gone on for several weeks, to give the elections some legitimacy. The danger is that the opposition will not be satisfied with partial implementation of the OPA and will boycott the elections, once again raising doubts about the legitimacy of the Ivorian government.

AKUETTEH